

While we are considering the antecedents of Handel we cannot miss out Reinhard Keiser for he was really a remarkable personality in his way, and did a vast deal in the direction of establishing a genuine German Opera – and might have succeeded if it had not been for all the silly courtiers of the small and big courts of Germany thinking it was the right thing to patronize Italian Opera after his time. He was born in 1673 at a place near Leipzig; and seems to have begun operations with a Pastoral called *Ismene* at the Court of Brunswick in 1692 – which was successful and led to his producing his first Opera

[Blank page]

Basilius there in the same year. Then he moved to Hamburg in 1694 and became head of the Opera House. His first Opera there was 'Irene' in 1697. He is said to have written no less than 116. They had quite a German character about them. He had a considerable gift of tune (and wrote delightful ballet music) and considerable sense of dramatic effect. Handel joined his Orchestra in 1703 as Violino di Ripieno, and afterwards became accompanist – and produced his first Opera there as we shall have occasion to observe later. Keiser influenced him a good deal, and ~~even~~ he even did him the honour to appropriate one of his tunes. Keiser had the reputation of being a man of somewhat disorderly life – but he was certainly a man of no little genius. He wrote some Sacred Music in the later part of his life, including some Passions, which have something of the genuine Teutonic ring about them. He died in 1739.

[Blank page]